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ABSTRACT

The guidelines in this booklet were designed to assist institutions and individuals concerned with children's books and reading in organizing programs and courses to help teachers stimulate voluntary reading among their students. Topics discussed in the booklet include the need for voluntary reading, the teacher's role in promoting such reading, and methods they can use to stimulate voluntary reading. In addition, the booklet offers guidelines for organizing teacher training courses and an outline of a course syllabus. Appendixes contain a list of international organizations concerned with reading and a copy of suggestions for promoting children's books and reading prepared by Unesco's International Book Committee. (FL)

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Promoting voluntary reading for children and young people

Guidelines for
teacher-training courses

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Preface

"One of the clear points to emerge from research into reading failure is that there was no association between reading and pleasure. . . . The role of teachers in stimulating voluntary reading among children and young people is . . . potentially the most powerful of all adult influences upon the young."

These quotations from the text sum up the purpose and content of this booklet : how teachers may be taught not simply to provide the basics of reading instruction but to encourage out-of-school, voluntary reading among their pupils.

In addressing this publication to teachers, Unesco recognizes their overwhelming importance in laying the foundations for an individual's lifetime reading habits. Teachers initiate the child into the mysteries of the reading process; they have a great deal to say about what a child reads and how much time he devotes to books in school; their personal attitudes towards reading are communicated, directly and indirectly, to their students. If a child comes to associate reading with classroom drudgery and rote, he may never reach for a book on his own initiative and upon leaving school may never read a book at all.

Although many teachers are conscious of the importance of voluntary reading to a child's overall educational development, not all are aware of the methods and techniques that may help them create interest in reading and encourage young people to turn to reading for sheer pleasure.

As a first step in filling this gap, Unesco's book programme called upon the expertise of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) to prepare this set of flexible guidelines to assist institutions and individuals concerned with

children's books and reading in organizing programmes and courses designed to help teachers stimulate voluntary reading through use of innovative techniques and materials. The differing roles of primary and secondary school teachers are taken into consideration, as is the necessity to "de-school" reading by involving as many non-academic groups as possible in the process (e.g. parents, librarians, journalists, publishers, the mass media, etc.). The guidelines are neither technical nor exhaustive; they may, however, serve as a basis for planning programmes that are tailored to meet specific local needs and conditions.

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She is responsible for the choice and presentation of the facts contained in this booklet and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of Unesco and do not commit the Organization.

Introduction

*"Modern attitudes toward education and many other areas of endeavour indicate that change is essential for the preservation of humanity. . . . Reading is and will continue to be an important learning skill. We must do the best possible job of providing this skill to future world populations."*¹

The year 1979 was designated the International Year of the Child. Special attention was given to many activities involving children throughout the world, and part of this effort was directed towards developing and extending activities related to children's books and reading. Unesco's "Books for All" programme has encouraged the publication of books in developing countries where, traditionally, reading materials have been imported from industrialized nations, and with them alien and different cultural values.

The promotion of indigenous publishing programmes and the translation of children's books are essential to the development of literacy in young people: learning to read is an irrelevance unless there are books and other reading materials upon which new readers may practise their skills. But additional prerequisites are encouragement for learning to read and guidance in the choice and use of books. One of the major influences on a child's life is schooling, and teachers are therefore important and continuous forces in child development. Since the teacher is also directly responsible for formal reading, he or she is potentially the most suitable person to assume the role of encouraging voluntary reading among children.

1. Ralph C. Staiger, "Looking for Better Ways to Teach Reading", in Ralph C. Staiger (ed.), *The Teaching of Reading*, p. 209, Paris, Unesco, 1973; Boston, Mass., Ginn and Co., 1973.

This report is therefore addressed to institutions, organizations or individuals who are concerned with children's books and reading, so that they may encourage the organization of courses for teachers on stimulating voluntary reading among children and young people. The importance of voluntary reading and the teacher's role in stimulating it are examined first, and this is followed by a review of methods and materials that might be employed. A final section offers guidelines for organizing courses.

The need for voluntary reading

*"There is no doubt at all in our minds that one of the most important tasks facing the teacher of older juniors and younger secondary pupils is to increase the amount and range of their voluntary reading. We believe that there is a strong association between this and reading attainment, and that private reading can make an important contribution to children's linguistic and experiential development."*¹

Learning to read is a complex intellectual task involving much more than word recognition and pronunciation. Mastery in reading is dependent upon practice on a wide range of texts, both in terms of complexity of language and variation of context. Reading has rightly become known as a skill, and a skill, by definition, means a practised ability. The essence of literacy in any nation is more than ensuring that there are teachers to teach reading. There must also be books to read and, within the individual, a strong desire or motivation to want to learn how to read.

Teachers, books, and pupils with motivation are the substance of most institutions devoted to education. Teachers and books need money and commitment from central governments. If both are forthcoming, one side of the education equation is formed. Motivation of pupils cannot be guaranteed by money or governments, but motivation is the key to effective learning and is perhaps the teacher's most important task in the classroom. Whatever technological developments take place, much learning in school will remain dependent upon the ability to read, for

1. Department of Education and Science, *A language for Life: Report of the Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science under the Chairmanship of Sir Alan Bullock*, paragraph 9.4, London, HMSO, 1975.

reading is the primary means for gaining access to information during the schooling period.

If reading is basic to progress in learning in all subjects, speed and fluency in reading are essential. Becoming a fluent, fast and effective reader is a circular process: a child who is a fluent reader will become interested in, and learn from, his reading, and a child who is interested in learning from his reading will become a fluent reader. Thus, skilled reading is entwined with high motivation. The problem in schooling is that pupils must acquire knowledge, values, beliefs and concepts that may not always match their interests. The teacher's concern is not only with the content of what is to be learned but also with skills—for learning, for living, and for performing tasks from crafts to laboratory experiments.

It has been said that "since almost all classroom teachers use materials pupils must read, they are all involved in the teaching of reading and writing, in one way or another".¹ Most instruction in reading is considered to be the province of primary-school teachers, although there are strong arguments for different levels of reading skill to be taught throughout the schooling period and even into further and higher education.² Certainly, there are fundamental differences between primary and secondary education in countries with an abundance of print and in those with a strong oral tradition. Primary schools have a tradition for introducing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and oracy and have emphasized the development of enjoyment for reading through story-telling, play-acting and games. Secondary schools, however, have traditionally emphasized knowledge in academic disciplines, based upon the assumption that pupils have learned to read at primary school. Pupils have undoubtedly learned to read narrative prose, largely through reading fiction, but many pupils do not enter secondary school with an ability to read for meaning, which will form the basis for efficient and effective study throughout school and adult life. The reading of narrative prose is

1. H. A. Robinson, "The Preparation of Teachers and Specialists", in Staiger (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 131.

2. See, for example, E. A. Lunzer and K. Gardner (eds.), *The Effective Use of Reading*, London, Heinemann Educational Books for the Schools Council, 1979.

almost entirely superseded by the reading of non-narrative texts for information related to academic work. When fiction is encountered by secondary-school pupils, it is traditionally within the study of literature and is aimed at criticism and analysis rather than pure enjoyment and emotional pleasure.

It is possible then, to discern certain features of children's reading according to levels of schooling. In primary school, basic skills are developed through use of reading material that may be instructional or simply aesthetically pleasing. In secondary school, basic skills are assumed, and reading material is almost totally instructional and academic. Whereas primary-school teachers can discuss and encourage voluntary (freely chosen) reading matter, secondary-school teachers feel constrained by the need to develop concepts and factual knowledge, which usually results in little or no time devoted either to encouraging voluntary reading or developing more sophisticated reading skills for gathering and processing information.

Why, then, is voluntary reading important? The preceding paragraphs have outlined the importance of reading to the total schooling process and the basic differences in approaches to reading between primary and secondary schooling. One potential bonding agent is voluntary reading by pupils. Such reading may be related to fiction or non-fiction or both, but the catalyst is that children who engage in voluntary reading do so because of their personal motivation. Perhaps they love reading fiction for its intrinsic properties of language appreciation, or because the story is of interest, or for the shared experience between writer and reader. Perhaps their non-fiction reading represents dreams of travel or adventure, illumination of hobbies, or information about plants, animals and birds. Little is known about why children choose to read voluntarily¹ but it is evident that those who do, read fluently and with understanding.² Voluntary reading contains the element of personal motivation, and if this is nurtured then reading skills can be developed and applied to

1. See, for example, F. Whitehead, *Children and their books*, London, Macmillan, 1977.

2. M. Clarke, *Young Fluent Readers*, London, Heinemann Educational Books, 1976.

school learning across the whole curriculum. This should produce children with the basic skills for lifelong learning and for participation in national development.

The teacher's role

*"Various studies have revealed that the teacher's influence on a child's choice of book is considerable . . ."*¹

The teacher controls much of a child's compulsory reading in school, and the child's experiences of such reading will affect, and be affected by, any voluntary reading he or she does. Since reading fluency encourages greater motivation, and since fluency is aided by practice, the teacher who encourages voluntary reading has much to gain. Voluntary reading is associated with pleasure, and pleasure is a strong motivating factor for the development and extension of all kinds of reading.

Also crucial is the availability of books, and guidance in their selection. The teacher may be unable to influence the provision of books outside of school, but within school he should try to ensure that a range of reading material to suit all ages and most tastes is provided. This implies personal knowledge of books and of children's abilities and tastes. Reading specialists and librarians are invaluable experts and should be consulted constantly. A number of surveys of children's reading have been made, and findings from them offer useful clues for a teacher's stimulation of voluntary reading.

For example, it has been found that children's favourite stories at different ages reflect their particular fantasies and emotional conflicts at that time in their lives. Reading such stories enables a child to identify with someone else in a situation that mirrors his own experience and may help him to resolve his inner conflicts. Similarities may be discerned among the most widely

1. Department of Education and Science, op. cit., paragraph 9.4.

read authors over several decades: vivid and dramatic narrative, recognizable characters, and virtue triumphant at the end. Reading surveys have also shown that voluntary reading declines as children grow older, and that the percentage of fiction available in school collections decreases at the same time. Fiction and other narrative reading matter (biographies, for example) remain more popular in children's voluntary reading; teachers could build upon this preference.

Surveys of reading habits provide essential information for teachers wishing to expand children's voluntary reading. Examination of failed readers has an equally valuable contribution to make. Adult-literacy schemes have been developed in highly industrialized nations with many years of compulsory schooling systems, and also countries where national development or geographical conditions have impeded or reduced the availability of formal education. Many factors are associated with the failure to learn to read during schooling; motivation and relevance are particularly crucial, and a child's home background exerts a powerful influence. If parents have no apparent need to read for work or leisure, teachers may be faced with a child for whom reading seems an irrelevant skill. Certainly there will be few occasions outside school walls when that child can practise skills or share experiences. Reasons for illiteracy are varied, including illness, defective sight or hearing, family disharmony or frequent removal to new locations. New communications media may have an influence, and in some countries television viewing forms a large part of a child's daily activities, a fact that can be used as a basis for the teacher's work with children's voluntary reading, rather than dismissed as an irrelevance. Research has also shown that television can motivate children to read either by reading or dramatizing stories or by introducing hobbies and interests. It must be remembered, however, that as the world changes and knowledge of it grows, all activities are in competition for children's attention. One of the clear points to emerge from research into reading failure is that there was no association between reading and pleasure.

The great contrasts between compulsory and voluntary reading may at first appear to the teacher to be outside his frame of

reference or beyond the boundaries of his control. The two kinds of reading are in fact very closely associated, and concern for children's voluntary reading should correspond with concern for compulsory reading. This is most noticeable in the area of literature teaching, where so often the emphasis rests upon criticism and analysis for the purposes of formal assessment through examinations. Some of the problems in this traditional approach to the teaching of literature are usefully expounded by T. D. Johnson, whose observations are worth noting¹. For example:

Teachers have a special responsibility since they must help the child appreciate literature more fully without damaging enjoyment of literature.

And this position is best illustrated by the following:

I am sure every reader can identify at least one book, poem or play that was ruined by over enthusiastic or misguided "analysis".

Language does indeed "convey meaning via a web of associations", and children's maturity and experience, like that of adults, cannot but influence their pleasure or displeasure, perceptions and interpretations of the written (or spoken) word.

The teacher's role in the stimulation of voluntary reading may be seen as one of sophisticated appreciation for books, children, and home and school environmental influences. In addition to fluency and enjoyment the teacher is also being asked to share a common reading experience and become a consultant on children's books through co-operating with specialists in reading and children's books. The teacher must appreciate the fact that there are demands made upon a child's time outside school, thus reducing his available reading time, and that the sheer availability of suitable books is a necessary precondition for voluntary reading. The teacher must therefore strive for adequate, varied collections of books in the school, in classroom and library, making sure that narrative texts are made available for older children to help counterbalance the secondary-school emphasis on

1. "Presenting Literature to Children," *Children's Literature in Education*, Vol. 10, Spring 1979, pp. 35-43.

information (non-narrative) material. The availability of books has been demonstrated to be a powerful stimulus to reading development,¹ and where a school cannot itself afford to provide enough books for voluntary reading, external provision in public libraries, or bookshops within the school where books are available for sale, can offer supporting provision. Indeed, book ownership is a feature of an individual's commitment to reading, and an experimental programme that aimed to encourage children's personal ownership of books found that not only had voluntary reading increased among children as a result of the programme but also their confidence, enthusiasm and success in reading ability.²

The role of teachers in stimulating voluntary reading among children and young people is therefore potentially the most powerful of all adult influences upon the young. There are few nations where education is not provided for young people for some of their formative years. The schooling period provides a focus for attention to reading as no other period in an individual's life can; the teacher has a captive audience of young minds in formation, and a responsibility for developing in them the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective participation in the development of their society.

1. See, for example, D. N. Fader and E. B. McNell, *Hooked on Books*, New York, Berkley Publishing, 1968; and W. B. Elley et. al., *The Impact of a "Book Flood": Interim Assessment Prepared for the New Zealand Book Council*, New Zealand, Council for Educational Research, 1975.
2. S. Zuckerman, "To Own a Book", *American Education*, Vol. 13, No. 9, 1977, pp. 13-16.

Stimulating voluntary reading

"The best way to prepare the very young child for reading is to hold him on your lap and read aloud to him stories he likes, over and over again."¹

Voluntary reading in primary schooling must involve story-reading by the teacher. The familiar voice giving emphasis to the printed words as appropriate, the pausing for extra enjoyment when a child visibly responds to a particular paragraph, the questioning, answering and repetition of favourite sections of a story—all contribute to a child's mental perception of books as items that hold great pleasure and delight. The success of radio and television story-telling helps to clarify the importance of story-telling as an art and as a skill that can be acquired. The best way to tell a story is to memorize it in full or as main points and to face children as the story is recounted. This allows the teller to accentuate those parts that appear to give most enjoyment—a fact the teller may not grasp without face-to-face contact. It also offers a close sharing of the experience with each individual child, producing an almost secret communication process between teacher and child through facial expressions as their eyes meet. Good story-tellers abound in countries that have retained an oral culture, but they can also be trained, and primary-school teachers should develop story-telling skills just as the drama teacher learns the craft of acting in order to be able to teach it. Young primary-school children bring enthusiasm and spoken words with them—most of their learning prior to school is based on verbal

1. C. Lefevre, *Linguistics and the Teaching of Reading*, New York, McGraw Hill, 1964.

instruction and practical demonstration. It is appropriate to begin (or continue) to develop voluntary reading by this method.

But children at primary school are also learning to engage in a variety of activities that stimulate thought, knowledge-learning and development of skills. Teachers can foster voluntary reading through hobbies and home events. Classroom diaries, containing news of events in a child's family life, can provide a basis for reading simple information books, so that the pleasures to be gained from learning may be developed.

As primary-school children grow older their curriculum deals more seriously with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, but it also includes the appreciation of art, culture, science and the physical environment. Learning becomes a combination of listening to teachers and reading books for information. The language component covers grammar and language construction and appreciation for literary forms, through practice at spelling, writing, poetry reading, play-acting and silent reading or reading aloud. During the teaching of reading teachers are aware of the great variations in children's ability to decode words and differences in abilities to assign meaning to individual words or groups of words in print. Voluntary reading aids the process of comprehension and fluency, and encouragement is perhaps more important at this stage than at any other. The halting, faltering reader must become quicker and more fluent if he is to enjoy reading, although his enjoyment of listening to someone else read may not diminish. The teacher who continues to read to children acts as a constant reminder, to those who experience frustration when reading for themselves, that it is possible, eventually, to overcome their frustration. Sensitive teachers tend not to worry about the decoding of every word encountered, but encourage children to skip over difficult words and try to achieve an overall sense of meaning from whole sentences and paragraphs. At the same time, sensitive teachers ensure the provision of books that reflect the varied backgrounds and experiences of the children in their classes, for readers have fewer difficulties with words and concepts with which they are already familiar.

Writing their own stories provides many children with the

pleasurable experiences of creating and reading for themselves. Using their own language, expressions and experiences, children can understand when reading what they have written. From this, they can begin to discover that authors are perhaps just ordinary people, like themselves, telling stories or conveying information to others. At all times, the early years at school should be underpinned by the elements of motivation and enjoyment for reading, both to oneself and to others, in the hope that sound language development is assured. Language is both the primary means for the communication of thoughts and ideas and the primary means for developing the process of thought itself.

Voluntary reading should be at its peak, in terms of time available to devote to it, towards the later primary-school years. Children tend to be more fluent, are able to draw upon experiences and recognize situations and characteristics, and are vocally expressive to a comparatively high degree. The capability to form opinions is developing and is relatively uncluttered by social customs that later inhibit the expression of opinion. It is possible to capitalize on opinion-forming by encouraging personal responses to books that have been read either during school hours or at home. Teachers can keep records of voluntary reading and group together children with similar interests or tastes so that they may share their reading experiences. It is important for children to feel confident about their choice in reading; teachers ought not to evaluate a child's voluntary reading, for it represents his perceptions of life and himself in a very private way. To intrude upon this by suggesting that some reading is good and some is bad is to induce sentiments of inferiority, a lack of confidence and a feeling of failure to please or read the "right" books in the child—the basis for the failed reader so frequently represented in those who later apply for adult literacy tuition.

The early secondary-school years are relatively free from the limitations imposed by examinations, but voluntary reading in children begins to decline as new academic and personal interests emerge. Secondary schooling divides the curriculum into discrete subjects and, more important from the child's viewpoint, it separates the teaching staff into subject teachers. This makes a co-ordinated approach to the encouragement of voluntary reading

more difficult than before. Although language and literature teachers remain primarily concerned with reading, there is no reason why all other teachers should not be part of a school's support for voluntary reading among its pupils. A school library or bookshop can be a forum where many different interests are represented; pupils can gain a great amount from the presence of subject teachers in such places, since staff have personal interests in sport, crafts, other hobbies and literature from which pupils can draw enthusiasm and guidance in their choice of reading.

As children become teenagers they may take on additional responsibilities that reduce the time and motivation for voluntary reading. They may be called upon to care for siblings or to assist in maintaining or increasing family income. School imposes demands as the final examinations are approached. But perhaps the greatest influences on voluntary reading are brought about by personal development and its inevitable inner conflicts as children grow towards adulthood. Almost all of the research into teen-age reading suggests that voluntary reading declines for most children during these years, but this may in part be due to a lack of attention paid to the maintenance of voluntary reading by teachers and parents. There is now a richness in publishing for the teen-age market; much of it sensitively written and technically well designed. It must be remembered, however, that a natural teen-age tendency is to form peer groups whose preoccupations are related to verbal or physical activities designed to demonstrate strength and maturity rather than to communicate aesthetic experiences. Encouraging voluntary reading is a challenge for the teacher, but even among the peer-group behaviour patterns there are occasions when the private, personal relationship between writer and reader has a valid part to play in the development of the individual. If the pleasures of voluntary reading can be sustained, wholly or partly, throughout the later years of secondary schooling, then a permanent relationship between reading and enjoyment will be secured. Learning from the printed word, finding peace, pleasure or aestheticism in books—these will be tangible benefits from the teacher's efforts to stimulate voluntary reading that will lead to the child's development as a person with the essential background for good citizenship: functional literacy

and many of the tools for meeting whatever new challenges or demands are to be faced in the future.

Methods and materials to aid teachers in such work are outlined below. Some specific materials are mentioned because they are known to the writer as valuable aids irrespective of their country of origin. Some materials would not be so useful outside the cultures that produced them, so references have been made to the kinds of material that might be produced locally or nationally by groups of teachers, librarians or other reading specialists. The materials and methods are difficult to sort into a hierarchy that corresponds with the sequential unfolding of school education: some ideas work better with young children than with teenagers whilst others work well across a wide age range. Some, and this point must be emphasized, rely less upon the age of the children but rather more upon the personal enthusiasm of the teacher. In defining literature as "something that happens in the mind of a human being when that person reads or listens to a story" Johnson¹ emphasizes the importance of adults who work with children as "a vital link between the world of books and their intended audience". The vital skill for the teacher in encouraging voluntary reading is perhaps the communication of his own enthusiasm and pleasure to those he seeks to influence, so that they become well-motivated readers in their own right.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Awards

Awards for outstanding children's books have many benefits. The publicity attracted by awards is valued by publishers and authors and may help to improve their output and standards. National and international awards can be supplemented by locally given prizes, thus encouraging local authors and the representation of local interests in children's books.

1. *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

Book fairs

Book festivals and fairs enable a whole community to focus on children's books, from libraries, schools and bookshops to neighbouring industries and crafts. A whole range of activities might be planned. Authors could read stories and give talks about how and why they write. Puppetry, drama and poetry readings could be performed by drama students, parents, teachers and children. Crafts and industries might mount displays supplemented by information books. People with unusual hobbies could demonstrate them and answer questions. A large book exhibition with posters, leaflets and audio-visual materials would make the setting attractive and provide a wide range of books to arouse interest. Theatres and cinemas may be willing to include related plays and films into their normal programmes and even shops have been known to carry a book-fair theme into their window displays. Book fairs may also form part of larger events. Agricultural shows and national celebrations may be prepared to offer space for a book stand.

Book maps

Children could be given the task of identifying all the locations for books in their community, which could be marked on a large-scale map in the school. Locations could include libraries, bookshops and school classrooms, and also special personal collections in any child's home. A parent, for example, may have a personal collection of books on a lifelong hobby or interest.

Book reviews

Although there are journals that include reviews, many reading interests are not represented. Teachers and children could review books for journals, a school magazine or notice board. The reviews could be illustrated by other children and might be supported by displays of related objects, cuttings and books. Children might also talk about their reading, or act out dramatizations. Reviews of information books could also be

linked to subject teaching. If available, radio and television could be used. Expressing personal options about books aids the development of critical faculties. Groups of teachers could review books for classroom use, sharing problems and experiences of using particular books in certain contexts or with certain pupil groups. Daily and periodical press, radio and television programmes for adults should be encouraged to include reviews of children's books in their review sections.

Clinic libraries

Teachers who live or work near child clinics or hospitals might encourage the library service to run a clinic or hospital library, particularly aimed at pre-school-age children and their parents. The early years of childhood are especially important, and many young children are gathered together in such centres. It is also an excellent opportunity for teachers to make contact with parents of their future pupils. Older children may gain from helping to administer a clinic library, learning some of the pleasures to be gained from sharing books with the very young.

Creative writing or speaking

There are numerous examples of creative writing activities based on books which may develop voluntary reading. Children could write a letter to a favourite author, describe the appearance of a character as if he or she were sitting in the same room, write to pupils in a neighbouring school about a particular book, or draft an advertisement to "sell" a favourite book—and the class could vote for the most persuasive example.

Children could assume the roles of characters in books and act out how they might behave in another context, perhaps in another geographical or historical setting. In some countries, the radio programmes that broadcast live telephone calls from listeners have become popular; children could enact such a programme with either a real or substitute author at one end of an imaginary telephone.

A book that involves a journey could be used as a class

exercise; each child helping to plot the route on a map as the story unfolds.

Exhibitions

Displays of books, if they are bright and attractive, can do as much to stimulate voluntary reading as any direct action by teachers. A regular series of displays in a prominent position attracts the attention of children passing by, and this not only increases their opportunities to see books, but also improves their actual reading performance, even without teacher intervention (see Elley in the bibliography). Illustrations, sound recordings, slides and other audio-visual media may enhance an exhibition.

It is important that exhibitions be in a part of the school where most children go and that all items be immediately available for loan to any child whose interest is aroused. Regular displays related to popular television programmes are often mounted in libraries, and the practice could be extended to school libraries or classrooms as a means for stimulating the interests of children who tend to read little outside school.

Family reading groups

Whole families could be encouraged to read and discuss their reading with each other and with other families. The benefit to families is that reading becomes both a shared activity and a means for stimulating voluntary reading among its younger members. Groups could meet occasionally and share their reading with teachers, librarians and others.

Keeping records

Teachers who keep records of children's voluntary reading are better able to share and extend it. Pupils could be encouraged to keep their own reading records, together with their comments, on books enjoyed or disliked. Such valuable knowledge for the teacher would help to determine which books should be provided and also lead to discussion between pupils and teachers about the

topics covered by children's reading. There would also be a stimulus for pupils who had not heard some of the items or for those who were not sufficiently fluent to be able to thoroughly enjoy their reading.

Literary competitions

A favourite form of encouragement, competitions for story-writing are popular with teachers and pupils. Local newspapers, broadcasters and bookshops may be willing to sponsor such events, and winning entries may be displayed in libraries, community centres and shops. Writing and reading are closely linked, each offering a stimulus to the other.

Older pupils

Helping children develop into responsible citizens may be aided by involving them in the reading programme for younger pupils (see the article by Crone in the bibliography). Teachers have a limited amount of time, but older pupils could supplement this by reading and listening to other pupils.

Where there is a dearth of suitable books for children, older children could write and illustrate traditional folk-tales and legends for their younger colleagues: a double benefit for both age groups.

Parents' workshops

Teachers could help parents encourage voluntary reading by running workshops where the value of story-telling and parental encouragement is demonstrated. Primary and secondary schools have a role to play, and perhaps parents of older children could be given guidance on reading materials. Parents and teachers would benefit from meeting each other in an informal atmosphere, sharing their interests and experiences with those of the children. Many parents of young children may not appreciate the importance of reading in language and thought development: teachers could promote it.

Posters and art work

Interest in reading can be stimulated by arranging competitions for poster designs. Winning designs have been successfully applied to carrier bags, greeting cards, school and library publicity, and badges.

Art work can also be linked to specific themes and include other kinds of creative expression, for example, sculpture, woodwork, modelling, poetry, story-writing, factual research.

Straightforward artistic design might be extended to include cartoon interpretations of books perhaps leading to simple film or video animation by older pupils.

Printing and binding

A display of the processes for producing books might link with technical and historical studies, or simply show what happens to an author's work. A local newspaper or publisher may be willing to lend examples of books in various stages of production and perhaps allow parties of schoolchildren to tour the workshops. It may be possible to combine with the school art department and demonstrate simple printing techniques.

Reading panels

Children might enjoy recruiting colleagues to form reading panels, whose views are regularly sought on the books being read. The records of views could provide teachers with information on reading habits and the most popular topics.

Reading time

Maintaining voluntary reading throughout secondary schooling requires attention from teachers and the allocation of time for pupils to read. Surveys of classroom practice have shown that although reading is a basic requirement for the study of most subjects, very little of any pupil's time during the school day is actually spent on reading under supervision by teachers. Practice

in reading is essential for developing fluency, and fluency leads to achievement and pleasure. This is an important pre-requisite for efficiency in reading for learning. Very little reading time occurs in schools: most of the classroom time is devoted to listening to the teacher. Reading when the teacher is present enables pupils to seek help or guidance and to talk about their reading.

Reading time at school is also important for pupils with a home environment that is not favourable for reading. There may be disruption from babies or other relatives, poor light or heat, domestic chores waiting to be done and many other adverse conditions for private reading. People at home may be unable to help children with difficult words, paragraphs or interpretations—the teacher can. In many countries, television and radio can be stimuli to voluntary reading, but they may also be deterrents. The school can create a good reading climate by allocating space (perhaps in a library or classroom) and time for children to read books they have chosen themselves.

Research

The most important aspect of any teaching is its development. Research into successful or unsuccessful activities and methods, done by teachers themselves, can lead to development not only within their own school and classroom but also in other communities and countries. Teachers should keep diaries and monitor their work, noting books read by themselves and their pupils, reading levels, book reviews and popularity, evaluation of new methods, problems and difficulties tackled and resolved, conversations with children, parents and other teachers, and any school events or policies concerning children's reading.

Research done jointly between primary and secondary schools could be most valuable. It could link all the developmental variables involved in voluntary reading habits and analyse book availability and promotion patterns between the two sectors. Not enough is known about children's voluntary reading, and groups of teachers working on research in this field would add a great deal to understanding and improvement.

Responding to books

Acting out stories, plays and poems encourages interpretation for children of all ages and reading levels, and is an enjoyable, creative experience in itself. It can generate interest in books and requires minimal effort from the teacher. Children in groups naturally act out situations, a talent that could be harnessed and developed on behalf of other pupils.

School book days

An interesting example of one school's two-day reading event is described by Kennerley (see bibliography). All classes were cancelled for two days and each classroom filled with books, authors and teachers. Children could travel from room to room, reading books, talking about them in small groups or listening to authors read. Posters, films and filmstrips were continuously available for viewing and there were puzzles and competitions throughout both days. The headmaster's room was a quiet reading area with plenty of floor cushions. Each evening, a feature film was shown for parents and older children. A school might launch a new library or bookshop in this way, or it could be an annual event, possibly at the beginning or end of a term.

A school book policy

A school consists of three core elements: teachers, pupils, and learning resources. Books are a primary learning resource, and a school should agree on a policy for their selection, storage and use. A staff meeting should consider the school curriculum and what resources are needed for its support. Teachers should ask themselves about the kinds of books they should select, the proportion of fiction and non-fiction, which subjects should be covered and which age groups. The criteria for selecting individual books should be established, and guidelines developed. Such criteria would include the appraisal of language and text levels, illustrations, accuracy and bias. It is impossible to make adequate selections without clear knowledge of the reading

abilities of the pupils, and staff should be aware of the variations in both reading levels and interests among pupils. The person responsible for the school library must be included in the formulations of a policy, and external help could be sought from librarians nearby if one is not available within the school. Staff would need to know about any books already known to pupils; this might be obtained by engaging them in discussions. A blueprint for school book selection would help to avoid imbalance in book provision, ensure adequate sharing of financial resources, and make all teachers aware of their important influence on reading development.

School bookshops

There is a clear link between the development and maintenance of voluntary reading and the personal ownership of books. (see Kennerley and Roth in the bibliography). Perhaps the greatest contribution a school can make to voluntary reading is the provision of books for children to possess, to have at home when they are in the mood for reading. Money for bookshops can be raised by teachers, parents and pupils, or the stock may be based on donations and exchanges. In some countries there are specialist suppliers for school bookshops who will select, supply and display a range of books, changing items regularly. Bookshops may be permanently allocated to a corner of the school or packed in containers until the time they can be offered to pupils. The running of a bookshop may be in the hands of teachers, parents, pupils or a combination of all three groups. Pupils may design posters to advertise the bookshop and all those involved could participate in story reading and work on hobbies.

Seasonal weeks

Many seasonal aspects of life could be explored by the whole school or by individual teachers. Poems, stories and information books on any of the seasons or on particular festivals could be promoted. Spring or Christmas could be explored through literature or informational materials, and like most seasonal

topics, they are already familiar to very young pupils. Older pupils might also explore the environmental effects of the seasons either through inquiry or discussions of experiences.

Story-reading by older pupils

Older pupils enjoy reading stories to younger pupils. The experience of sharing stories is valuable within the family, and many children already read to their younger brothers and sisters. This could extend the time available to teachers for story-telling and for listening to beginning readers, who gain much from reading aloud and talking to someone about the stories they have enjoyed.

Surveys

Surveys of children's reading may provide factual data giving valuable feedback to all those concerned with children's books. Surveys may relate to books read, access to books or perhaps to the comparison of television viewing and reading. Results could be written up by pupils and perhaps presented to whole classes or schools.

A survey of films, plays, radio and television programmes might lead to related displays of books, or to inquiries for finding out which programmes were based on books. Or, as an alternative, a survey might discover information about extracurricular hobbies and interests that could be supplemented by exhibitions of related books.

Some of these surveys could be carried out by student teachers, which would provide them with a sound understanding of children's books and reading habits before they commence teaching.

Television and radio

Broadcasting is an effective medium for generating interest in books. Panels of authors, teachers, parents and pupils may be invited to review or discuss books and reading. Dramatizations

are popular, and publicity for book events can reach mass audiences. Story-telling on radio and television is immensely popular and overcomes distance and social barriers between children and books. Professional television producers in some countries have created programmes that promote books, and some are designed to teach basic reading skills either to children or adults. International exchange of television programmes is possible and worth pursuing. National teacher organizations could identify such programmes and conduct discussions with producers for programme exchange. Three main kinds of programme exist: (a) basic reading skills (for example, *Sesame Street*), (b) advanced reading skills (for example, *A Good Read*), and (c) promotional programmes (for example, *The Book Tower*). Viewing by teachers could lead to indigenous productions of similar programmes.

Theme weeks

A whole school could run a "thematic week" when all lessons are linked by one common theme. An example of a theme that could be adapted in all curricular areas in "our town or village". Lessons could include its history, geography, plants, animals, weather and climate, statistics (for mathematics classes), culture and traditions (through literature), development and use of languages spoken in the locality. Printed material could be made available in all classrooms: books, newspapers, magazines, home-made materials and audio-visual media. Pupils could be encouraged to produce their own material.

Period themes have always been successful, and many interests, hobbies, school subjects and stories can be successfully linked. For example, an exhibition of books on the nineteenth century can be supplemented by food recipes from the period actually cooked and displayed, costumes sewn, household furnishings and objects, agricultural implements, coins and a whole range of historical and geographical studies.

Translations

One of the problems in many countries is the lack of good children's books in the language of the country, or in the languages of the children in a multilingual community. Some teachers with a foreign-language ability could meet and initiate a modest translations programme, perhaps with the help of a university language department.

Guidelines for course organization

"The key to selecting activities that will help children to develop greater appreciation of the stories they encounter under the guidance of a teacher lies in an understanding of what literature does that no other discipline does."¹

In a perfect world all teachers, parents and other adults with whom children and young people have contact would appreciate the need for voluntary reading and would do everything in their power to promote it. In the real world, however, it may only be possible to provide courses to help those who actually seek help, and to recommend to institutions with a responsibility for training teachers that elements of their training should include techniques for the promotion of voluntary reading throughout the total schooling period of a child.

Course organizers should aim to include the inculcation of certain attitudes, knowledge and skills. Desirable attitudes are those concerning the value of voluntary reading as a means to self-development, to learning across all areas of the school curriculum, and to the acquisition of aesthetic appreciation for the printed word. Expectation of successful achievement of a measure of reading fluency should be encouraged, and biased, qualitative judgements on children's choices should be avoided. Many of the points made in our second chapter should be aired and discussed by small groups of teachers, both as a means for discovering what research evidence exists in support of children's reading preferences, performances and difficulties and as a means for aiding teachers in the development of their personal thoughts and preferences.

1. Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

Knowledge of children's books and other reading materials is crucial. There is only one way to acquire the kind of knowledge observed in librarians and other reading specialists: teachers must read a wide range of children's books and continue to do so. It is the only sure way to remain in touch with the available literature. Small group discussions are a valuable method for establishing suitability and relevance for children of various ages and abilities. The establishment of book-reviewing circles among neighbouring teachers should be encouraged as a means for keeping up to date. Teachers must also learn of the secondary information sources that convey details of new books published. These will include journals carrying reviews and feature articles, guides to literature for children, helpful organizations and services, and special collections of material that represent a full or wide range of the indigenous or imported publishing output.

Skills for selecting relevant material for classrooms, libraries and bookshops must be developed carefully. The choice made available to children is at least as important as motivating them to read. The promotion of voluntary reading demands a range of skills in the teacher, but the crucial skill is that of communication: the teacher must learn to project his own enthusiasm to children and must develop the skill for telling stories or reading books aloud with clear expression, verbal and facial emphasis, and a responsiveness and flexibility that permit variation in pace and rhythm according to any one group of listeners. Reading, when enjoyed, gains much from being shared, and the teacher's skills will include the art of asking the right questions and making the right responses, which will encourage such sharing of reading experiences.

Teaching methods, as always, are those that best match the needs of the group being taught. Instruction must be relevant in order to be effective, and the means for establishing relevance in the minds of adults in training is to draw upon their own experiences—in this case, of reading as a child and as an adult. Small groups briefed to examine why favourite books were enjoyed can be merged in order to establish what voluntary reading can represent to children and young people. Information on secondary information sources and organizations can be

included on handouts, whilst the development of unbiased selection criteria is best achieved through practice at reviewing and selecting particular items.

Course materials must include research papers on reading development, literacy and related topics, with time set aside for such evidence to be read and discussed. Survey research based on interviews with children is of primary importance; if not available, teachers could conduct their own. A collection of children's books is essential. This should be wide ranging in scope, subject content and readability levels, and all age groups should be represented. Journals and other sources of information about children's books and reading should be provided as part of the collection. No course would be complete without examples of promotional activities and aids. Television and radio programmes, films, filmstrips, slides and printed publicity materials should be available for the ideas they may generate in the minds of course participants.

Undoubtedly the best personnel for teaching courses concerning children's voluntary reading will be those who have experience working in the field. Already mentioned are librarians and reading specialists, but parents and experienced teachers would complete the team: parents with their first-hand experience of active, efficient voluntary readers and teachers with their instructional expertise. Representatives from adult literacy programmes, remedial teachers and guidance and counselling personnel have much useful knowledge that might be tapped. A national group composed of representatives from each of the groups mentioned might be convened in order to plan an outline that could be adapted to meet local needs and resources, thus including all relevant expertise at an initial stage in course development. Such a group might, as a first step, identify gaps in the available primary and secondary literature.

Local circumstances and financial resources will determine the duration of courses for practising teachers. Since familiarization with children's books is important, it may be more appropriate for organizers to consider short but regular attendance over a number of weeks or months, rather than block courses over several days. Longer periods of time are needed for reading

and assimilating what has been read. However, sometimes distance prevents sequential attendance, and organizers might then favour several consecutive, residential weeks at a convenient centre. Funding is a major consideration everywhere, and perhaps correspondence courses merit consideration. They overcome the problems of funding residential courses and travelling long distances. Because face-to-face contact with tutors is not always possible, television, film and audio recordings may be an appropriate solution. Students would rarely be totally isolated; other teachers and parents could be recruited into local study circles or discussion groups. Experts may be funded to make visits to groups from time to time.

Courses should begin with experience of voluntary reading. A story that is read well to an adult audience reminds them of the pleasure from the written word that is the aim of their future promotion efforts among children. Speakers could review many of the items referred to, but the essence of effective learning at all levels is participation, and courses should aim for a large percentage of time devoted to group and individual consideration of the topics included in course plans. Reading the books provided in the exhibition must also be given high priority; substantial time must be allowed for their individual reading and appraisal. Practice in story-telling, questioning, conveying enthusiasm and sharing reading experiences is appropriately carried out in small groups in which feedback from listeners is included.

One of the desirable results of courses to encourage the promotion of voluntary reading is the formation of associations among teachers, parents, publishers, booksellers and other organizations where help may be available. It would seem appropriate to devote at least one session in a course to identifying relevant associations and groups and assessing their aims, objectives and achievements. It may be possible to invite representatives to talk about their associations and how links might be forged. Libraries in any locality are invaluable, and details of their resources and networking arrangements should be made available, in addition to knowledge of their human expertise.

Outline course syllabus

*"We are left in no doubt that, although the home background is undoubtedly of key importance in its influence on a child's reading, an almost equal weight of influence must often attach also to the differing levels of provision made by the school, particularly in regard to such matters as the kind, attractiveness and suitability of the books made available in the school library and the class libraries, the ease of access which children have to them, and the degree to which they are encouraged to make use of them."*¹

Title: "The Promotion of Voluntary Reading in Schools".

Aims

1. To create awareness and understanding of the need for and value of children's voluntary reading, for the benefit of children, parents, teachers and others concerned with national development.
2. To develop criteria for selection of books for children in relation to reading level, age, subject content and technical quality.
3. To provide information on books published for children, methods for developing and encouraging reading, and sources for information and guidance for teachers, parents, librarians and other adults who work with children.
4. To develop strategies for schools wishing to create policies for promoting voluntary reading.

Objectives

By the end of the course, teachers should be able to:

1. Apply book selection and evaluation criteria to publications for

1. F. S. Whitehead et. al., *Children and Their Books*. London, Macmillan, 1977.

children, based upon a knowledge of children's reading tastes and abilities, for a specific age group of children with whom they have contact.

2. Know where to seek information and guidance on children's reading in their own locality and country.
3. Draft guidelines for the implementation of a school book policy in their own school.
4. Record, monitor and evaluate children's reading with their own classroom groups.
5. Employ a range of techniques directly with children that would encourage reading (for example, story-telling, group discussions and displays).

Course elements and suggested methods

1. Psychology of reading:

A specialist lecture on the interrelationship between the development of language, thought and reading, followed by time spent reading key articles on the topic and small group discussions on particular sub-themes. At a plenary session, participants should collectively list a number of reasons why reading is important to child development at home and school.

2. Reading skills and problems:

A list of the full range of reading skills, from decoding to comprehension, should be distributed. Secondary-school teachers may be unaware of the cognitive and psycho-motor skills inherent in the reading process, and an exposition of them should lead to discussion of the reading problems that commonly occur. A lecture on possible remedies should follow, given by a reading specialist experienced in remedial work with children and adults.

3. Study skills:

The school curriculum is mainly devoted to the study of a wide range of subjects, and teachers are naturally inclined to the development of knowledge among pupils. Many teachers are aware of the close links between a child's ability to learn and his expertise at reading comprehension. Small group assignments requiring teachers to delineate the elements involved in

the study of their subject should be especially fruitful. Groups could be given typical classroom assignments and asked to outline how they would complete them, but with the additional instruction to list specific individual skills. For example, "using a book to find information" actually involves the skills of deciding which words to look for in the index, being able to find them, finding relevant pages, scanning the page to locate the keyword, skim reading quickly to estimate the value of the information, detailed reading for comprehension and identifying specific points for memorizing or making notes. This exercise links the first two course elements with the next, and places the importance of children's voluntary reading very firmly within the teacher's normal classroom practice.

4. Children's reading habits:

Previous research on children's reading could be covered by an explanatory lecture supported by tables, diagrams and reviews of books they read. The sequential development of quantity and quality is best exposed graphically, with the variations according to age highlighted and discussed. A small group exercise wherein teachers try to suggest criteria for "a good book" would lead participants into the next course element.

5. Children's books:

An exhibition of children's books must be provided. It should cover a range of age levels, ability levels and topics, and include items that are very popular among children and examples of books that have won national and international awards. Where possible, award citations and published reviews for most examples should be in the same location. Participants, having established their own criteria during the previous course element, should be exposed to the criteria employed by experienced professionals before spending time reading some of the books displayed. Silent reading should feature very prominently in the course, and each silent reading session should be followed by informal, unstructured discussions among the readers. It should not be necessary to force the enthusiasm and pleasure to be gained from voluntary reading if the exhibited books have been well chosen by the course organizer. The books should speak for themselves. A plenary

session should remind participants of the selection criteria and a collective revised list should be drawn up.

6. Story-telling:

Reading aloud and telling stories are the primary means for capturing children's attention. Course participants should be given practice by choosing favourite passages and reading them to each other in small groups. Each person should have an opportunity to read, listen and make critical comments on the performance of colleagues. Television is a powerful ally and should be used by each group so that individuals can appraise their own performance by watching recordings. Each person should be asked to note physical mannerisms, either helpful or distracting, phrasing, responsiveness to the story and to the listeners, and other factors such as pace, age suitability and audibility. Drama instructors would be ideal guides to these sessions, perhaps by circulating among the groups and giving demonstrations. Most teachers will be accustomed to communicating with groups of pupils, but reading aloud with dramatic emphasis may be an unfamiliar skill.

7. Classroom research on reading:

A range of methods for recording details of children's voluntary reading and evaluating progress could be outlined, with some examples made available for teachers to examine. Local circumstances will affect which methods are applied by individual teachers, but it is important that they should be able to see and consider a range of alternatives.

8. Sources for information on children's books:

Annotated lists should be provided, supplemented by any available publicity material from the organizations noted. Bibliographies, catalogues, guides and other items of professional interest should form a separate exhibition. A panel of representatives from local or national organizations could be invited to explain their activities and answer questions.

9. School book policies:

Small groups could work on drafting such policies, or on specific elements of a policy which could then be brought to a plenary session. Teacher groupings might usefully be on the

basis of age and ability levels taught, or on the kinds of school structures that exist.

A note on methods

Most of the course elements involve course participants working in small groups. Small group learning is not only highly effective, it is also appropriate for adults, enabling their experiences to be included and used as a foundation. Voluntary reading should have been a childhood experience for all teachers, and it ought to be drawn upon during the course. People remember best when they are actively involved in their own learning; lectures only are relatively inefficient, and it is estimated that students remember only about 20 per cent of a lecture after several weeks have elapsed.

Also emphasized is the time given to reading children's books made available during the course. A course on children's voluntary reading that excludes books and time for their reading could be compared to a course on cooking without any food.

Timing

No time allocations have been noted, because of local conditions and circumstances. It is suggested that the outline could be applied to short, medium or long courses: the degree of detail and the depth of study would need to be adjusted. The course could be offered as a block of consecutive elements or in weekly or monthly units over a period of time.

Level

Most of the elements are applicable to primary and secondary schools, but greater emphasis on story-telling might be made for primary teachers and special emphasis on study skills for secondary teachers.

Instructors

Specialists have been mentioned in some of the elements, and it is advisable to locate them if possible for any course of this nature. Two groups of professionals who have expertise and knowledge of many course elements are librarians and reading specialists, with literature teachers and teacher-librarians close behind.

Exhibitors

Local bookshops, libraries, publishers and related organizations should be involved where possible. Some will offer lists of speakers, and most will provide exhibits and publicity material. Educational institutions, broadcasting organizations and the press will often be very willing to help provide materials, including books, programmes and equipment.

Organizers

Co-operative organization would ensure a wide representation of interests and expertises, and might also result in offers of a course location. It may be appropriate to hold courses in or near centres where children's books are readily available—for example, in a library or reading centre. Being surrounded by books is a powerful stimulus to becoming involved with them.

Appendices

1 Some useful international organizations

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL LIBRARIANSHIP

School of Librarianship, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49001, United States of America. Open to all who are involved in school librarianship throughout the world.

INTERNATIONAL BOARD ON BOOKS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Leonhardsgraben 38a, CH4051 Basel, Switzerland. A network of national sections which reports activities in a quarterly publication, *Bookbird*, which contains articles on children's books, reviews, details of professional literature and books of international interest, and reports of national and international seminars, conferences and symposia on children's books and reading. IBBY is an invaluable point of contact for all involved with international approaches and activities.

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Section of School Libraries; Section on Children's Libraries. IFLA, P.O. Box 82128, 2508EC The Hague, Netherlands. IFLA brings together professional librarians from all over the world. It is an ideal point of contact for librarians and for teachers wishing to make links with professional librarians in their own countries. The two sections concerned with young people have carried out much valuable work to promote books and reading, including the consideration of multilingual material and the training of teacher-librarians.

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND READING RESEARCH

Mayerhofgasse 6, A-1040 Vienna, Austria.

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION

800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware 19711, United States. Aims to improve reading instruction through the study of the reading process and the stimulation of research. Also publishes journals and monographs, including the *Journal of Reading Research* (quarterly).

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH LIBRARY

Kaulbachstrasse 11a, Munich 22, Federal Republic of Germany. Provides a wide range of services including courses on literature, travelling exhibitions and an extensive international collection of children's books.

2 International Book Committee suggestions for promoting children's books and reading

On the occasion of the International Year of the Child (1979), the International Book Committee, an inter-professional body that brings together representatives of the major organizations concerned with all aspects of the book, formulated the following suggestions for activities that could be undertaken to promote children's books and reading. While the ideas proposed were, quite naturally, geared to the celebration of IYC, they remain valid and useful for continuing efforts in this domain.

SUGGESTIONS FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMMES

National book promotion programmes could be especially oriented towards children's book campaigns, organized by National Book Development Councils or similar organizations and making maximum use of press, radio and television to create widespread public interest and involvement. Such a campaign could include activities such as the following.

Reading festivals

Festival-type activities, attractive to the general public, but devised to stimulate interest in children's voluntary reading and in reading aloud (for instance, with the participation of authors) could be organized at various levels (local and national or even by language across frontiers), for particular age-groups or ethnic communities, within various institutional frameworks (schools, libraries, museums, children's hospitals, etc.) or in relation to appropriate public events (fairs, agricultural shows, religious assemblies, etc.).

The forms which these activities might take should be studied by National Book Development Councils, National Book Committees and special committees set up for the International Year of the Child, drawing upon the resources offered by national boards on books for young

Appendices

people, publishers and bookseller associations, library associations, reading and literary societies and teachers' organizations, as well as government authorities responsible for education and community development.

Such consultations should aim at securing the full co-operation of all parties and organizations in any way concerned with children's reading.

Wide publicity, especially through the mass media, could be given to these festivals and their results, particularly the awarding of prizes, certificates and other forms of public recognition.

Literary competitions

Young people, individually or in groups, could be encouraged to produce literary works, with or without illustrations, possibly suitable for publication, on subjects of interest to them. Exhibitions and public performances related to such works and special award ceremonies could be organized along the same lines as the reading festivals mentioned above, close co-operation being maintained with schools and youth organizations. In areas where national languages are still struggling to assert themselves, such competitions could be used to support national language movements. Outstanding works could be published and widely distributed.

Poster competitions

Many countries will no doubt wish to issue special posters concerned with children's reading in 1979 and will organize competitions for posters designed either (a) by children or (b) by artists and designers. These competitions would need to be held early in 1978 and adjudicated in the middle of the same year if questions of finance, production and the awarding of prizes are to be dealt with in time for the posters to be widely distributed early in 1979. Posters should of course carry the "Books for All" slogan along with the symbol of the International Year of the Child.

The juries entrusted with the award of prizes should be representative of all institutions and associations concerned with children and books.

Awards for children's books

Special publicity could be given in 1979, through the mass media, to existing awards for children's books (with particular reference to quality

of text, illustrations and production). The history of such awards and earlier prize-winners could be recalled through travelling exhibitions with associated lectures and discussions.

Where no such awards exist, steps could be taken to establish competitions in which children's books published in the year 1978 (or a period of several preceding years if necessary) could be judged with regard to paper quality, illustration processes and printing and binding.

National bibliographies on "the reading child"

The International Year of the Child offers a favourable opportunity for the compilation of national bibliographies dealing with children's reading, and governmental and other institutions could be asked for financial support for both research and production, in accordance with national priorities and resources. However, for the purposes of international comparison certain basic standards (ISB, UBC) should be followed.

Surveys of children's reading habits

National surveys on the reading habits of children (information on which is inadequate or non-existent in many countries) should be carried out. Parallel with these surveys, and informed by the results thus revealed, government and private institutions could conduct reading motivation campaigns directed towards young people.

Special postage stamp issues

World-wide interest in postage stamps and the frequent use of themes related to the life of children as subjects for stamp illustrations should provide opportunities for the issue of special stamp series on children's reading and learning.

Subjects for such stamps might include reproductions or representations of illustrations from famous and award-winning children's books, paintings or other art works which depict children's use and enjoyment of books; among these could be original illustrations and works by children themselves. Stamps should carry the slogan "Books for Children".

Book fairs

National, regional and local book fairs, book weeks, etc., could include special exhibits and activities related to children's books and children's reading habits. The International Year of the Child would offer a good opportunity for the establishment of such children's book events where the need exists.

Symposia on "children's books in our time"

Special symposia on children's books could be held in 1979, at national, regional and local levels, to discuss such subjects as: styles of writing, printing and illustration, sales prices, fees for authors and illustrators, distribution problems, reading levels and habits among young people, economic circumstances affecting book reading and book buying in relation to young people.

Press, radio and television coverage of the preparation and proceedings of such symposia would contribute greatly to their success.

Long-term programmes for children's books

In countries where there are real needs in the area of children's books, the authorities concerned might regard 1979 as a particularly suitable occasion to establish long-term programmes to remedy these needs. Particular considerations to be borne in mind might include:

1. Support for authors (training workshops, establishment of adequate standards of remuneration).
2. Support for illustrators (workshops to demonstrate ways of adapting traditional national arts to book illustration techniques and requirements, establishment of adequate standards of remuneration (etc.).
3. Sales prices of children's books (adjustment of prices to the purchasing power of the general public).
4. General production problems (paper supplies, printing and binding equipment, inexpensive production techniques).
5. Publishing children's books (publisher-state relations, acquisition of rights, translation policies, etc.).
6. Distribution of children's books.
7. Children's departments of public libraries, school libraries.
8. Ensuring the supply of good reading material for children (compilation of lists and catalogues of inexpensive books, free book distribution to poorer sections of the population, ensuring that all school children have their own textbooks by 1979).

9. Promotion of attractive, inexpensive children's books in national languages on all topics (with government subsidization where necessary).

Reviewing of children's books

Special attention should be given in 1979 to the often-neglected field of children's books in book review sections and programmes of the daily and periodical press, radio and television.

SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES

International exhibition of national children's book posters

An international exhibition of national posters published under the slogan "Books for Children" for the year 1979 would serve to demonstrate the magnitude of the efforts deployed. It could be an itinerant exhibition, starting perhaps from one of the world's large book fairs. The best posters could be selected, and recognized by appropriate awards, either by a special jury of book world personalities or by the popular vote of visitors to the fair.

International exhibition of award-winning children's books

Children's books awarded special prizes or other types of recognition in individual countries in 1979 could be assembled and circulated as an exhibition, during the same year, under the auspices of appropriate international associations, or possibly in conjunction with well-known children's book and book illustration fairs.

Exhibition of children's books as an aid to international understanding

A compilation of national children's book bibliographies might provide the basis for a selection of titles representative of different countries of the world which could constitute a travelling exhibition of children's books as an aid to international understanding.

International exhibition of national stamp issues promoting children's books

An international exhibition of such stamps could be compiled and exhibited at international book fairs in 1979, and awards given, either by a specially constituted jury or by public vote, for the best examples.

Children's books at international book fairs

Prominence will be given to children's books at international book fairs in 1979. In addition to actual displays of such books, symposia, lectures, public readings and specialized exhibits can also be arranged for the attention of representatives of the international book world attending these gatherings.

Regional co-operation in children's book production and distribution

Countries, particularly in developing areas of the world, can assist one another in children's book publishing activities through regional co-operative arrangements which may be negotiated under official auspices. Source materials can be shared and common illustrations can be used for different language versions under co-publication agreements of which the Asian Co-publication Programme sponsored by the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco provides an interesting example.

Regional agreement can be reached on production standards, economy in illustrations, etc., to keep such book prices within the purchasing capacity of the general public in the region. "Books" published as newspapers may even be used to meet the needs of young people and newspaper publishers might be invited to produce such "books" as their gift to children in the region in 1979. This latter approach may be particularly useful in providing children's literature in national languages in which few children's books are available.

An international art exhibition on the theme "children reading"

Art works depicting children reading, or reproductions or photographs of such works, might be assembled from all over the world and exhibited in one or more of the great art museums or elsewhere.

An illustrated catalogue of the exhibition would have a wide appeal to persons interested in the arts, as well as in children and reading.

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